

CORRESPONDENCE

Having spoken with members of this type of committee in other hospitals, I find they share similar feelings.

We estimate the personnel hours spent on an average audit at 34 hours per audit. This is in pronounced contrast to 375 man hours that the University of California, San Francisco, reported it spent on a particular audit. Using our conservative figures and \$10 per hour, this comes to \$340 per audit. As there are approximately 3 million admissions in the 543 community hospitals in California, this should necessitate some 3,000 audits per year or a \$1,200,000 expenditure. Adding on the bureaucratic expense for the gang downtown to shuffle papers, there is well over a \$1.5 million expense each year in California alone for an almost nonproductive activity.

Who is to blow the whistle to stop this waste? It should be our colleagues who are officers of the

peer review organizations. The San Francisco Peer Review Organization does not have any criteria for cease and desist limits on this program, and I doubt if anyone else does either. Not only are definitions of goals to be achieved in any program desirable, but limits of action need definition also to discontinue a program when it fails or has filled its purpose. But after all, when one is emotionally involved in a program it becomes difficult to speak out although other observers have.¹⁻³ As for me, I will no longer give my time or be associated with this program.

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Communicating by Touch

TOUCH IS THERAPEUTIC. We talk to patients by the way we touch them. If you touch them roughly, you are telling them that you are not very interested in them, not very thoughtful of them. If you touch them gently, you speak to them and you reassure them. So, you talk with more than words, you talk with the way that you touch during examination. I would evaluate a very high proportion of ophthalmologists and other physicians as being much too rough in their touch, and certainly almost all students are. So please consider how you touch a patient.

—WILLIAM H. HAVENER, MD, *Columbus, Ohio*

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